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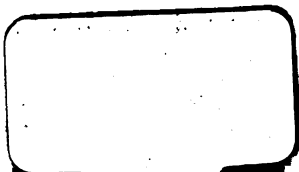
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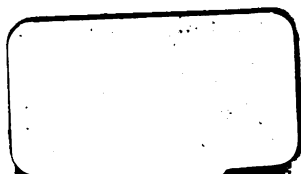


48. 299.





48. 299.



FIVE SERMONS.

BY

THE REV. MOSES MITCHELL, M.A.



"Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man.

"For I know not to give flattering titles: in so doing my Maker would soon take me away."—JOB xxxii. 21 & 22.

" With God is terrible Majesty.

"Touching the Almighty, we cannot find Him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice."—JOB xxxvii. 22 & 23.

"And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh."—GENESIS xxii. 14.

"Two things make a good Christian; good actions and good aims: though a good aim doth not make a bad action, good; (as we see in UZZA), yet a bad aim makes a good action, bad; (as we see in Jehu)."—TRAP'S COMMENTARY ON MINOR PROPHETS. Malachi, 3 ch. and 3 verse. Page 162.
London, 1654.

"Religion is a curious Clockwork; if but one wheel be distempered, all may go wrong."—TRAP'S COMMENTARY; *ibid*.

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR AT CARDIFF.

APRIL, 1848.

Price bound in cloth 3s. 6d., stitched 3s.

The profits, if any, will be devoted to the support and education of an orphan.

TO THE MOST HONOURABLE

THE MARQUESS OF BUTE,

&c., &c., &c.

Cardiff Castle, 19th April, 1848.

MADAM,

Allow me to offer to your Ladyship this small work, as a token of the gratitude and respect which I ever most sincerely felt, although from the infirmities of my disposition, I very imperfectly showed in my fidelity to your Consort. I have dedicated it to the memory of the late MARQUESS OF BUTE, because, (as you know better than almost any other living individual,) the doctrines taught and the duties enjoined in these Sermons were, as far as frail human nature under Divine assistance permitted, LORN BUTE's own faith and his daily practice: moreover, when I had the privilege of preaching them to the family in his presence, he expressed to me himself his approbation, and said of them, that they were in accordance with his own belief, and that he could not comprehend, how doctrines so scriptural, as a special Providence and Justification by faith only, could be by any controverted: these Sermons will, therefore, exhibit to the Christian Church the motives of his good actions, and induce all those relatives, friends, and acquaintances, who admire the character of his life, and are mourning his loss, to unite in ascribing praise to Him to whom all praise is due. —“Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name be the praise.”

If only one individual should become by a perusal of this little work a penitent believer through God's inexhaustible love in Jesus Christ, your Ladyship's grief may be lessened; there will be more joy in heaven; and you will be blest with this comforting reflection, that

God has still vindicated his own power, brought good out of evil, and made the event, which overcast you with bitter sorrow, subservient to the salvation of an immortal soul; you will rejoice then, although you must lament now, and you will praise God for thus having glorified himself by a bereavement, to you the more afflictive because so sudden and unexpected, and by an instrument so weak and so unworthy as the Author; but "God's strength is made perfect in our weakness," and is so made perfect visibly to prove that every good work is his own; because His Glory he will not give to another: His praise we may not give to any Being less than God.

My earnest hope is, as my prayer always, while I live and can pray, shall be, that Grace, Mercy, and Peace may surround your soul and the tabernacle in which it dwells, that the little boy, whom God gave you, may be spared by his special Providence, not only to inherit the Titles and Estates of his Noble Father, but to use his influence and wealth as his Father did, in promoting the good of his fellow creatures to the glory of God; that thus he may live to give true comfort and joy to you in future years, and that you may have the heavenly satisfaction of meeting him hereafter, with all those who were once dear to you on Earth, amongst the spirits of the Just men made perfect, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Redeemer, by the Sanctification of the Holy Spirit, around the Throne of our Just and Holy and ever-merciful God; and with great respect, I have the honour to subscribe myself,

Your Ladyship's

Most obliged and faithful

Humble Servant,

MOSES MITCHELL.

A T O K E N
OF
GRATITUDE AND RESPECT.
TO THE MEMORY
OF
THE LATE MOST HONOURABLE
JOHN CRICHTON STUART,
MARQUESS OF BUTE,
EARL OF DUMFRIES AND BUTE, K.T., F.R.S.,
&c., &c., &c.,
FIVE SERMONS,
BY
THE REVEREND MOSES MITCHELL, M.A.,
OF MAGDALENE HALL, OXFORD.
FOR EIGHT YEARS AND A QUARTER
HIS LORDSHIP'S RESIDENT DOMESTIC CHAPLAIN.

PREFATORY PRAYER.

O ALMIGHTY GOD, our Heavenly Father, without the blessing of whose Grace, even the Sanctification of thy Holy Spirit—no work is good, and our highest deeds but little profitable; no action holy, and nothing can prosper: We beseech thee to grant thy blessing upon this work, that it may bring some few to conversion and others to edification in the true faith, and so lead to the glorifying of thy name, in Heaven as well as upon Earth, by the Salvation of immortal Souls through the atoning merits of Jesus Christ thy only Son, our only Redeemer. AMEN.

Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.—PSALM 150, verse 6.

SERMON I.

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

GENESIS XLV. 8.

"So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God."

JEHOVAH-JIREH was the name which Abraham gave to the place, at which he was prevented, by the interference of Divine Providence, from offering up his only son Isaac a sacrifice to God, when a ram was provided for him to offer up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son. Jehovah-Jireh is a name worthy of God, and ought to be revered: and we also shall be happy, if in every event of this life, we can, like the holy Patriarch, trust in God as Jehovah-Jireh; for its meaning is as emphatic as it is consolatory: "The Lord will provide." Do we thus believe in the Providence of God, and confide in him always as the Jehovah-Jireh? The Lord who seeth all things—and foreseeing what events are coming to pass, provides for and secures the deliverance, preservation, present happiness and eternal salvation of his people. All who believe in Jesus Christ with contrite and penitent hearts are God's people.

All Christians profess to believe in the Providence of God;—but the actions of many clearly prove that their faith in it is very weak and imperfect. Have they ever inquired, what the Providence of God is? Hundreds, it is to be lamented, talk fluently of trusting in the Providence of God; hundreds, in whose minds it is but as the phantom of a dream, an airy imagination, of which they have no distinct conception—a word familiar upon their tongues, but a doc-

trine not understood, and, consequently, not confided in by their hearts. Now in our text, which forms a part of the affectionately consolatory conversation which Joseph, after he had made himself known to his brethren, had with them, there is a direct acknowledgment of the Providence of God; "So now it was not *you* that sent me hither, but God."

Perhaps it may be superfluous to attempt to define, but the difference between Wisdom, Prudence, and Providence, which are kindred excellencies, seems to be this.

Wisdom is simply a knowledge of good and evil, which may be partially acquired by the human, but is originally perfectly possessed by the divine mind.

Prudence is a disposition to choose good and avoid evil, from having a knowledge of the pleasure derivable from the good, and of the pain resulting from the evil: this is a human virtue, and is learnt by experience.

Providence rests upon Omniscience: it is the Divine Power to take measures to prevent evil and to construct good from a foreknowledge of all future events. Providence is the attribute of God only: it is larger than Prudence, and more comprehensive than Wisdom: these are confined to what is past or present only, and can forecast only probabilities; but Providence knows the past, observes the present, and foretells the future, as indubitable certainties; and if the Bible be, as without doubt it is, everlasting Truth, then there is for the comfort of all who will receive this Truth, a Divine Providence. No man can resist it successfully: no man can set aside the operations of God. "Behold the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, and upon them that hope in His mercy," Ps. xxxiii. 18.

This description of the Psalmist perhaps teaches better than any elaborate definition, what is to be understood by the Providence of God: it is the eye of Omniscience watching over the welfare of those who reverence His word and trust in His promises: such it is to

individual Christians, as it is to the whole Church : God continually exercising His wisdom in planning, His goodness in watching, and His omnipotence in executing, what is for the glory of His name, for the edification of His Church, for the general and particular good of His people. This is the Providence of God : God foresees—God cares for—God orders all things : He beholds not only all that has past and all that is present and all that is to come, but is himself the cause of their so being, either actually or by permission : Nothing will be, nothing can be otherwise than God appoints it to be. The Universe is under His Almighty will; the eye of the Lord is over all, and by His Sovereign Grace through Jesus Christ He governs the world.—Praise ye the Lord and let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord.—From these words of Joseph to his brethren, we learn

- 1stly. That every event is ordered by the Providence of God.
- 2ndly. That no adversity is necessarily a sign of God's disfavour.
- 3rdly. That the greatest blessings are sometimes conferred in the most unlikely way.

Lastly. That therefore to trust in the Providence of God through Jesus Christ is the wisest method of rendering our pilgrimage upon Earth easy and pleasant and its end happy.

- 1stly. Every human event is ordered by the Providence of God.

I do not now intend to speak of those mighty events, by which Empires are torn asunder and thrown down—by which Kingdoms are raised and established upon Earth, because though they rise and fall by the same rule yet our object now is to impress upon our own as well as upon your minds and hearts, what our blessed Saviour himself assures us;—that every thing which concerns us, that every thing which can or shall happen to us upon earth, is written in the book of God's Providence; that even the very hairs of our heads are all numbered.

The Providence of God is universal : it sustains and regulates the whole wide Creation : but not only so, it is also special and particular; it concerns itself about every individual creature in the Universe,

about the atom of a feather borne away upon the breeze of a storm, as well as about the fate of a Monarch hurled down from his throne by the ungedly tumult of a wicked and rebellious people. Only let it be by all of us remembered, that though evil be permitted for reasons which we dare not venture to fathom, yet God himself can never be, and therefore His Providence cannot be said to make Him the author of sin: but notwithstanding it does order and regulate every even the minutest circumstance in this sinful world; in spite of sin, in spite of Satan the author of sin, in spite of the enemies of God—it brings good out of evil—and so makes every thing work together for good to them that love God.

But once more it must be repeated, that we must remember that God, who is like His law, holy just and good—never was—is not—never will and never can be the author of sin; never will approve of wickedness: never will acquit the guilty who continue to be impenitent. Let every criminal heart be confident, that the day will come and is not far distant, when his sin will find him out.

If you feel disposed to question what has been now stated, let me entreat you to read carefully and with prayer the 139th Psalm, and I will not believe that you will be inclined to question, what the Almighty God himself has in His own true word stated.—

Is it so difficult to believe that every human event is ordered by the Providence of God, that you are still doubting, if such things are so?—Listen one moment. Is there any thing brought to pass, any even the most unimportant effect without the concurrence, by the power or with the permission of God?—Who governs in Heaven?—Who rules over the Earth?—Who is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords?—Who says to the mighty ocean, “Thus far shalt thou come and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?”—Who commands and even Satan, malignant though he be, dare not stay to rebel?—Is there any power in Heaven,—Is there any power upon Earth,—Is there any power in Hell beneath the Earth, that can resist, that dare defy God?

Has not God’s Omniscience foreseen—has not God’s Almighty

Power appointed—all that has ever yet, even to our own day, happened for the advancement of Christ's Kingdom upon Earth?—Is it not as easy for God to order human events as to array the lilies of the field in a glory greater than was Solomon's glory, when Solomon was in all his glory?

It might however be objected, that many human events are too insignificant to engage the attention of an Omniscient mind and to call forth the energies of Omnipotent power. What is too insignificant for our great God, for our Merciful God to notice?—Is aught which concerns the welfare of His chosen people, His own children too unimportant?—Be not unbelieving, my beloved brethren,—He who succours the green blade of grass in the field by commanding the showers from Heaven to water it, is able and does take cognizance of the minutest circumstances, which concern the welfare of man. This forms the greatness—the incomprehensible Majesty—the sublimity of God, that while He balances the universe in the palm of His hand—while He upholds worlds encircling worlds by His Almighty power, He also measures minutest atoms—watches the course of things imperceptible to human sight, directs them to their purposed end—even the smallest particle of sand blown to and fro by the varying winds and the least drop of water that drops down to fructify the earth from the clouds in the firmament, are observed and guided by His comprehensive mind, and so He overrules even the most insignificant events of our life for the promotion of His own glory and of our eternal good.

Man is a vain and sinful boaster. If he be rich, he would fain arrogate all the glory of having acquired wealth to himself:—If he be poor, he becomes discontented and falls into murmuring against God. If temporary happiness be granted to him, he is too prone to forget, that the same Almighty Power who gives it, can withdraw it even in the twinkling of an eye, in a sudden and unexpected moment, and if sorrow overtake him at night, he does not remember that joy may return in the morning. Thus sinfully ungrateful, he too com-

monly fails to confess, that his condition is such upon earth as God has appointed, because it is the best for him; and that the events of his life are under the control of Almighty Wisdom.

Let us learn to avoid the wickedness of despising or forgetting the goodness of Jehovah-Jireh, the God of Providence: and, under all his dispensations, whether joyous or afflictive, let us be always ready to confess—"It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth to Him good."

But some individual, listening to the suggestion of the carnal heart tempted by Satan, may say, "If every event be ordered by the Providence of God, it is useless for me to do anything myself: I will trust in God and with folded arms will sit at ease and tarry for the Lord to come and do me good. Away with such a presumptuous thought: to obey it would be profanely wicked, impious in the highest degree: it is one of the snares which Satan lays for the perdition of nominal, indolent Christians. It is for us to do our duty faithfully in that state of life, in which it has pleased God to place us, with all that care, with all that industry, with all that zeal, with all that watchfulness, and with all that perseverance, which He has commanded us always to use, subjecting all our works unto His will in Hope: even as the husbandman ploughs and sows in Hope, and yet not a grain of corn strikes its root into the earth and shoots forth its first blade, until God commands it to grow. We must go forth, as is our destiny, to our labour until the evening-closing scene of Life's brief day and leave events to the governance of God.

The knowledge, that every event of life is ordered by the Providence of God is full of consolation to the Christian in affliction. It divests sorrow of its keenest pangs and makes dispensations of woe from God more easy to bear: it teaches us to hope in adversity, even as we are joyful in prosperity, and with humble and contrite hearts to be thankful when we lie languishing in pain upon the bed of sickness. Such a belief must be cheering and salutary: if it cannot save us from all agony, it will at least lighten trouble and strengthen expectation of future happiness. It is good to know, that we serve a

benevolent Master, but to know that we serve one who cares for our welfare with the tender solicitude of an affectionate Father, is better ; yet such is the care of God over His children : God cares for us with the affectionate solicitude of a most loving, merciful, and tender-hearted Father, and He will undoubtedly so order the events of our life, if we serve Him faithfully, that they shall, one and all, be conducive to our comfort of Peace upon Earth, and to our rest of Happiness in Heaven.

2ndly. No adversity is a sign of God's disfavour.

It does sometimes happen, that what we have most earnestly desired and what we have most ardently prayed for is not granted to us by the good Providence of God. It does sometimes happen, that instead of the apparent good, which we were eager to obtain, a real evil of sorrow, sickness, or some other painful deprivation is dispensed. We may be despoiled of every earthly possession, severed from our kindred, exiled from our country, denied our dearest Hope, and plunged into the direst misfortunes and into the lowest depth of adversity ; but should such events, poignantly sorrowful though they be, ought such visitations to shake our Trust in God ? No—for they are not signs of God's disfavour,—to His own people such chastisements are rather tokens of His Love, and therefore we ought not to let them plunge us into despondence. We must not suppose, because God sends us afflictions and disappointments, that therefore He has forsaken us. We should be wrong to think in our sorrows, that God has said of us, as He did of old of the posterity of Ephraim, “ Ephraim is joined to Idols, let him alone ;” the very afflictions themselves prove, that God is not leaving us alone, and therefore that He has not forsaken us. Through what a labyrinth of mysterious Providences was God pleased to lead Joseph, whom He destined to be second only to Pharaoh in Egypt : whom He destined to be the saviour of his venerable father and of his envious brethren, when the dreadful famine, with which He had decreed to visit the nations, should be extreme.

When Joseph was sold for twenty pieces of silver to the Ishmaelites by his brethren in their hatred,—behold! how God works apparent impossibilities!—behold! how God in ancient times foreshadowed future events to those whom He appointed to take part in them!—behold! God's foreknowledge established! His Omnipotence confirmed!—behold! God's Special Providence! and wonder at and admire and fear and love the God of the Universe!!! "All things are possible with God:"—but when Joseph was sold by his brethren to the Ishmaelites, how little likely was he then to become, what in the course of God's appointed time he became? When he lay in prison, a solitary and forgotten, how less likely?—but yet even in prison, during his most depressing adversity, we read that the Lord was with Joseph and showed him Mercy: nay more, we see, why God permitted the hatred of his brethren to rise to so great a height against him; he was to be sent into Egypt to provide food for their father and themselves, and so Joseph tells them, with brotherly affection, to lessen the anguish they were feeling in their consciences on account of their wicked dealing to him, "God did send me before you to preserve life; so now, it was not you, that sent me hither, but God." Therefore afflictive dispensations are not a sign of God's disfavour, but rather a token of His Mercy. This, my beloved brethren, is a consolation and good for all men to know, whether rich or poor, but particularly for the poor to know, that if they be trusting in God, and believing His promises, and obeying His commandments, that then, though poverty is the lot, which God in His wisdom, has seen good to allot to them on Earth, yet that neither poverty nor sickness, nor any other painful adversity is a sign of God's disfavour: it is not a sign that God is ceasing to care for you,—to watch over you, to love you, and to provide for the welfare of your souls. Praise ye the Lord.

3rdly. The greatest and richest blessings are sometimes conferred upon us in the most unlikely way.

Had Reuben, when Joseph's brethren, in the fiery heat of their

ungodly anger under the bitterness of their hatred conspired to slay their innocent brother, attempted to dissuade them from their cruel purpose by foretelling what afterwards occurred: had he said to them—No, no, no, I entreat you, do not let us murder our brother Joseph, but rather let us send him down into Egypt by selling him to these passing merchantmen; because I foresee, that there will be a grievous famine in a few years throughout the Earth, and I have been forewarned, that God's will is to raise him up to be ruler over the land of Egypt, to preserve corn for the inhabitants of that land and for ourselves; so that when the famine is growing intolerable and food so scarce as to be unprocurable for money, we shall be able to go to our brother there, to get the necessary supply of food for our subsistence—which of his cruel-hearted brethren would have believed his words? How incredulous is man of God's dealings! Would they not, every one of them, have laughed him to scorn? How short-sighted are the sons of Adam! How deep, and how searching, and how far reaching beyond human ken, is the foreknowledge of God! How just and how merciful, how gracious and how holy, how wise and how good, is God! God is good to all. While these cruel brothers were planning the ruin of the son of their aged father's love—how abominably hateful! how dreadfully mischievous is envy!—while they were devising evil against their guiltless brother, God was permitting them to dispose of Joseph in a way for him to become in future years, the preserver of life—the saviour of their own life and also of the lives of thousands of the people, and was purposing to raise him into a position to be easily able to return good to them, for the unmerited evil, which they had done unto him.

Nothing was less likely, at the time his brethren sold him to the Midianites, than for Joseph to become as God made him the preserver of their lives. But so he did become, through a passage of adverse circumstances almost unparalleled, to be next to Pharaoh upon his throne, raised out of the damp mildew of a dungeon to

govern with the power of the royal sceptre over a mighty empire, he did become, what God had foreshown he should become.

Thus the greatest blessings are sometimes conferred upon us in the most unlikely way: and therefore lastly, to trust in the Providence of God is the wisest method to render our pilgrimage upon earth, pleasant, peaceful, and happy, without anxious care about the morrow's events.

Such consolation is the conclusion which may be drawn from this discourse: and good, indeed very good will it be for you, my brethren, to regulate the desires of your minds, to adjust all your thoughts, to guide the affections of your hearts, and to control your passions by it. You may thus become contented and happy: you will thus know, that your condition and your portion upon earth are what have been considered best for you by the wisdom and goodness of Jehovah-Jireh. You will not envy those, whose circumstances are different: you will not hanker after what God withholds from you for your eternal good:—in the darkest passages of life, you will find out something, for which to praise God, and so you will acquire an equanimity, which the bitterest sorrow will not be able more than for one short moment to disturb, and a peace of heart and of conscience, which the world can neither give nor take away.—Nay more, you will keep engraven upon your hearts' best and holiest affections, a record of God's Providences in your favour—and guided by past experiences of His tender mercies and loving-kindnesses towards you, the sunshine of Hope will gleam upon the darkest cloud that overcasts your earthly tabernacle;—the sting of your most poignant sorrows will be blunted;—your every disappointment converted into an expectation of joy, which shall be eternal in the Heavens.

Thus your pilgrimage through this vale of tears will be rendered in spite of all its woes, an easy and pleasant journey to a home of everlasting happiness; your frail bark, as it is sailing over the stormy billows of life, shall be carried in safety onward to the desired haven;

the Providence of God shall sustain you in every danger ; the love of God shall befriend you in every difficulty ; His Wisdom shall guide you into the good way : God will exert his Omnipotence in your favour ; as the beloved of the Lord, even as Benjamin, dear to his father's heart, (his venerable father, the emblem of the Ancient of Days,) you shall dwell in security under the shadow of His wings, and the Lord shall cover you all the day long : His Almighty arm shall defend you : His unerring hand shall guide you : His counsels shall be your wisdom : His oracles your law ; and finally He will receive you into glory. Therefore let me implore you this once more to trust in the Providence of God, my beloved brethren, through Jesus Christ, then, when your flesh and your heart shall fail, you shall have God to help you, a Saviour strong and mighty to deliver you, and the Holy Ghost to comfort you, and so God will be the strength of your heart and your portion for ever.

We pray thee, O God, to impress these truths upon our minds and to engrave them upon our hearts, that we may know them, and believe them, and obtain eternal life, by living upon them, through Jesus Christ our only Redeemer, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, three persons, but only one God, be ascribed, as is most justly due, all the praise and glory of every good thought, word and deed now and for evermore. Amen.

SERMON II.

THE GUILT OF SIN.

GENESIS XLIV. 16.

"How shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants."

GOD has distinctly revealed himself to us in the Bible as the God of Grace and the God of Providence; but not as a God approving or countenancing sin. As the God of Grace, He bestows upon the children, whom He loves, all spiritual blessings through Jesus Christ; and as the God of Providence, He over-rules events and brings them to concur in promoting His glory and their eternal happiness. He does bring good out of evil, as He can bring good out of anything, but He does not authorize His children to do evil, that good may come; indeed He shows His utter abhorrence of all wickedness by leaving criminal hearts to be tortured until repentance upon the rack of a guilty conscience: "There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God." We may and some do, notwithstanding, persevere in the commission of sin for a long time without feeling so acutely its sting; but at length the sleeping conscience will awake, as it did in the brethren of Joseph, and then, when we are overtaken by its evil consequences and feel the poverty, wretchedness, and dismay, into which we have plunged ourselves by our passion for forbidden pleasures, we become conscious of our folly in having loved the world inordinately; ten thousand fears arise with bitter remorse to harass and torture our souls; we fall under painful disquietude into

the agony of despair, and we know not how to excuse our many wickednesses;—what way of escape can we find?—God hath found out our iniquity, how can we clear ourselves?

Such was the condition of Judah's mind and such was the question which Judah, overwhelmed with confusion in the presence of his brother Joseph, asked his brethren, when his conscience was stung with the awakening remembrance of the cruel and unbrotherly treatment, which he and his jealous brothers had shown to the innocent son of Rachel, whom their father most loved; the crime, which they had committed by selling Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver, rushed through his heart like an arrow winged with judgment:—How shall we clear ourselves? he exclaimed—God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants.

The occasion, on which Judah put this question is well known by all, who are familiar with their Bibles: one word to the young by the way; hasten, my dear young friends, to become familiar with all the oracles of God, and pray earnestly, at morning, at noon, and at night, for grace to be able to follow all the good advice, to obey all the holy commandments and to trust in all the faithful promises of God in your Bibles. Judah did not know that Joseph's silver cup had been put into Benjamin's sack by the command of Joseph himself, as a contrivance to detain with him his brethren, whom he still loved, notwithstanding the hatred they had shown against him, for the purpose of making himself known to them: the fact of its being in Benjamin's sack was so plain a proof of guilt, that Judah searched in vain for an argument to prove him innocent of the theft. He had promised his venerable father, that he would be surety for the safe return of Benjamin; and by this evil event he would be prevented from redeeming his word. His calamity was overwhelming; he was oppressed with a two-fold difficulty; he could see no way of defending himself and his ten brothers against the charge of having stolen Joseph's silver cup, the cup from which he drank and with which he was used to divine or make trial: and by their own united

judgment, Benjamin's life was forfeited and themselves condemned to be bondsmen to their brother Joseph: hence the cause of his despair; hence this exclamation—How shall we clear ourselves?—then immediately the criminal hatred they had so long ago indulged against Joseph, flashes, like an accusing spirit, across his memory, and he acknowledges the justice of God:—"God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants," by which he confesses, that their present trouble is a just retribution for their former wicked treatment of their, as they still believed, lost brother Joseph.

The history of Joseph is so interesting that almost every child becomes acquainted with it early; it is therefore unnecessary to spend more time upon it: rather will we proceed to teach you

1stly. That, although God over-rules all events, evil as well as good, for the happiness of His creatures, yet He does not allow His children to do evil that good may come.

2ndly. That the commission of sin invariably produces the pressure of a guilty conscience.

3rdly. The pressure of a guilty conscience is a torture almost intolerable, terrible to bear.

1stly. God is himself the author of all good: He is in himself essentially good: There is none good, but one, and that is God, God over all blessed for evermore. It is therefore contrary to the nature of God to approve evil: and therefore also contrary to his character to permit us to do evil, that good may come. God is not, God cannot be the author of sin: He utterly abhors it: because it destroys what He most loves: it is His abomination. Some mockers once slanderously reported of the holy Apostles, and affirmed, that they said, "Let us do evil, that good may come:" but what is the Apostle's defence?—"Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid:" and of the impious calumniators, he declares—"their damnation is just." There is not throughout the whole Bible one single solitary passage, which correctly read, would or could encourage a notion so ungodly, a dogma so profane. The wages of

sin is death, and what God has threatened to punish with so dreadful a penalty, for what purpose soever it may be committed, must provoke His anger. Let me then entreat you, my beloved brethren, never to be misled by such a delusion. Do not conceive, because Joseph told his brethren, that it was God and not they, who sent him into Egypt, that therefore they were not very wicked in selling him, as they did to the Ishmaelites : they were doubly criminal : their sin was threefold and accumulating guilt : they fostered the hatred of jealousy in their hearts against him : in the first instance, they conspired and resolved to murder him. It is true, that, from the actual commission of this horrid crime, they were deterred by the intercessions of their brother Reuben, who was the only one amongst them, who showed any kind or measure of affection towards Joseph : but by the contemplation of it, they incurred its guilt : neither would they be entreated to extinguish their envy and to drop their hatred : they put him into a pit to be starved to death, and it was only by the Providential appearance of some merchantmen, Midianites, who were passing by, that they did not leave him there to perish of hunger. Thus their wickedness was more than one, a heap of iniquities : although from what they were at the time perpetrating God was purposing to bring forth much future good both to Joseph and to themselves. In like manner guilty were the unbelieving Jews, who crucified the blessed and adorable Son of God, though in executing that cruelty, when they vociferated—"Not this man but Barabbas," "Crucify him, crucify him"—they were fulfilling the prophecies and executing the decrees of Jehovah.

God showed his abhorrence of their crime upon Judas, who betrayed him ; upon Pontius Pilate, who unjustly gave Him up to be put to death ; and upon the Jews themselves, who so turbulently shouted out, "Crucify him, crucify him !"—God is still punishing their posterity and we see them still under His wrath. God always punishes sin, and we may be confident, that what He so punishes,

He will not allow us to do with His approbation, even though, by the wisdom of His own counsels, He may make it work together for good to the children, whom He loves.

The end will not and cannot justify the means, if wicked means be used to effect it: if the end be good, but the means operating to produce it sinful, God's disapprobation will follow and His anger must be incurred.

We can have no justifying reason: there is no available excuse for the commission of any one even the most trifling sin. God has denounced it: from the day of Adam's first disobedience, it has been denounced: God never will approve it: it must always provoke His wrath; for as sin destroys all goodness, if God were not Omnipotent, it would destroy God himself; that is, the Devil, who is the author of sin, would, by destroying God's essential character: therefore is Hell prepared for the punishment of the Devil and his angels, and God does, and will punish the impenitent sinner; notwithstanding He can and does, by over-ruling the wicked devices of Satan and the transgressions of men, make them subservient to His own glory and to the good, present and future of His believing people: God will punish the impenitent for the hardness of their hearts with eternal death: "The wages of sin is death: but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

May Almighty God by His grace impress these truths, my beloved brethren, upon your hearts and enable you to believe them for the welfare of your immortal souls. Remember, that although God so governs the world by His over-ruling Providence as to bring much good out of all evil, yet He does not permit us to do evil, that good may come. We must not wilfully commit even the smallest sin;—we may not advance a good cause by falsehood; we may not be dishonest in order to be generous; we must not leave our just debts unpaid, to be illustrious for our munificence; we may not defraud one, to be able to be liberal to another. No, we must not countenance sin in wicked profligate men in order to make the everlasting

Truth of the Gospel more palatable to the carnal heart; but we must do our duty diligently, faithfully, piously, as those who love and fear God, in that state of life in which it has pleased God to place us, and so doing, we ought to leave, with contented and humble submission to the Divine will, all events to the Government of the holy, just, and good Providence of God.

2ndly. The commission of sin invariably produces the pressure of a guilty conscience.

Perhaps the sinner, when he is first planning the crime, which in the progress of time he wilfully commits, flatters himself with the foolish notion, that if he can but do it in secrecy, he may remain undiscovered, and at least in this world be never called upon to undergo punishment for it: this flattery is the unction of the tempter to the folly of the wicked. This was the folly of the brethren of Joseph. They conspired and resolved to murder Joseph and to return home with this false tale to their pious and venerable father, "that some evil beast had devoured him:" but dissuaded by Reuben from shedding his blood with their own hands, they sold him to be a slave and an exile in a country remote from his father and his home: to be a bondsman to strangers in a strange land; and in order to hide their guilty conduct from Jacob, their unsuspecting father, they killed a kid of the goats, and dipped in its blood the coat of many colours, which Jacob had made for Joseph to wear, because he was the son of his old age, and because he was the son of Rachel to whom he had given his earliest love, : and so stained with blood they brought it to the holy and venerable Patriarch. The good old Jacob's heart, when they showed it to him, and told him this falsehood—"This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no;" was easily deceived by their guile. He knew it and said—"It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him: Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces." Thus far they achieved their crime without discovery: they had got rid of their brother,

whom they envied, because God favoured him, and they deceived their aged father by making him believe that Joseph, whom he loved more than all his children, had been devoured by an evil beast.

Jacob was wrong to show this partiality; God withdrew his favourite son from him for a time, and his grief for his loss was most severe: hence parents should learn to distribute their affections equally amongst all their offspring, and to love all of them with equal kindness and with equal favour.

His wicked sons were permitted to deceive him: but though Jacob could not read the thoughts of their hearts, yet the everwatching eye of God had marked their wickedness, and in due time punished them for their cruelty, by awakening their consciences to a keen sense of their guilt, when deliverance from the troubles which had overtaken them, seemed, humanly speaking, impossible.

They had remained, as we may reasonably conclude, all the years that had passed, without so acutely feeling the weight of the sin they had committed: but still they had not forgotten it: they could not forget it: for sin once committed adheres to the memory: its pangs become inseparable from the soul—until the Saviour send His Holy Spirit to take it off from the burdened conscience: indeed, the remembrance of their sin had, without doubt, at intervals often interrupted their happiness: but when they came to Joseph, and he pretended to take them for spies, come to spy out the nakedness of the land, and he put them altogether into ward or custody three days, and threatened to keep them there,—and they feared for their lives,—then did their consciences awake, and the sin, which they had been able to conceal from their father, rushed like a rankling arrow through their breasts to poison their peace: and they said, “We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear: therefore is this distress come upon us.” Then secret sins are thus punished by the pressure of a guilty conscience: “There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God.”

It was the pressure of a guilty conscience, which harassed them with needless fears and caused their hearts to faint, when in the first instance they found their money restored in their sacks' mouths; it was the pressure of a guilty conscience, which made them quake, and grow pale, when they were brought into Joseph's house by Joseph's command: it was the pressure of a guilty conscience which embarrassed Judah, when he despairingly exclaimed, "How shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants."

Let me then exhort you, my beloved brethren, to be watchful over your hearts to avoid the commission of every, even the smallest sin; for the smallest sin is an offence against God, who is infinitely holy, and the smallest sin is large enough to incur eternal wrath: remember out of the heart proceed evil thoughts which are the roots of every lust—the seeds of all concupiscence and the main-springs of all the crimes that wicked men in the excess of forbidden passions commit. Do not believe that the darkness of night is any darkness to God; that, because you creep with a light tread and stealthy step—that God does not hear you on your way to iniquity—that God does not watch your movements and see your trembling agitation and know your path to crime. Do not imagine, that, because you lock the door of your chamber, that the Almighty is not present to see your wickedness; whether, in the commission of your sins, you be alone, or whether in your impious follies you be associated with a companion, deeply fallen into sin and woe, participating in your ungodliness,—remember, that the barred door cannot lock out an Omnipresent God, and that bolted shutters cannot hide you from the all-searching, closely-piercing eye of Jehovah. Nay, you cannot silence your own conscience; it will observe you, and having contracted guilt, its pressure will be almost intolerable, a burden too heavy for you to bear. Your conscience will condemn you, and "if your conscience condemn you, God is greater than your conscience and knoweth all things." Yes, God truly is merciful and does pardon many and most

grievous sins for Jesus, His beloved Son's sake when we repent and believe : but God is just as He is merciful, and holy as He is just : therefore the wilful commission of sin does invariably produce the pressure of a guilty conscience, and the pressure of a guilty conscience is almost intolerable, a torture approaching in its severity to the fire that is never quenched, to the worm that never dies, and most terrible to bear.

3rdly. The pressure of a guilty conscience is a torture almost intolerable, most terrible to bear. There can be but few persons now hearing me, whose own experience will not bear witness to this truth. What ! is there in this congregation an individual so highly privileged, as never to have felt the burden of the pressure of a conscience in a measure guilty ? To such an one, if such there be, we would say with the Holy Apostle—Thank God for your present sanctified state, but beware: “let him that standeth take heed lest he fall.” Disquietude of heart, harassing fears, rankling expectations of evil tidings and the terrors of the future judgment, these are only a few, indifferently selected, of the agonies of the guilty sinner. The pressure of a guilty conscience interrupts every temporal enjoyment, and destroys all spiritual peace ; there can be no happiness with a guilty conscience—freedom from its tortures cannot be purchased with gold or with silver, or with jewels : a release from its corroding fetters cannot be procured by any earthly treasure : it is as intolerable as the beginning of everlasting perdition. Behold that wretched man, with his eyes now fixed like one aghast and now wandering from side to side ; his pale face, his wild and unsettled gaze, his emaciated frame—all signs of mental suffering—must awaken sympathy in every Christian heart ; but what is the cause of his misery ? Why are his nights sleepless, his days sorrowful, his heart all but broken ? Why does he wander from place to place, filling every house he enters with bitter complaints ? Why has peace departed out of his heart, and the sleep of pleasant quiet rest from his eye—

hids? The sun rises still in its glorious morning brightness, but he observes it not. The moon and the stars shine in their usual brilliancy, but he knows it not: the green earth, beautiful in Spring, puts forth its rich fruit; the woods resound with the songs of happy birds, singing in their merriness, but he is deaf to their music and blind to the beauty of Creation; his heart is not in harmony within, and therefore in discord with all without it; he is bowed down; he is burdened with the pressure of a guilty conscience. He is in despair: he dares not confess to a fellow mortal the crimes he has committed; glad would he be if he could forget them: but their guilt is inseparable from his mind—he cannot dislodge it, because of impenitence, and he is miserable. He is afraid to talk with his neighbours, afraid lest any word should escape from his lips to betray the secret of his soul, his hidden wickedness; he dares not unlock his thoughts; he shudders when no cause of alarm is near; he thinks every man must be his enemy or a spy over him to detect his sin, and if he ever hear an allusion made to a crime like the wickedness he has committed, his heart quakes and he has much difficulty in persuading himself, that his guilt is not known. He shuns society to avoid detection, and wanders like a desolate and friendless, solitary, wounded-hearted mortal, without being able to settle down in any comfortable abode upon earth—as long as he is impenitent, without peace: as long as he is unbelieving, without hope: for he cannot extract the arrow, which has transfixed his heart and is destroying his life. Such are the painful effects of a guilty conscience on the mind and heart of an impenitent and unbelieving sinner.

Do not think, that the picture is overcharged: remember, what cruel Cain was after he had barbarously murdered his unoffending brother Abel: remember, what Judas the traitor became after he had betrayed his good and benevolent Master—that gracious Lord, whom he ought to have loved, revered, and honoured, and been ready to defend with his life.

And why is it, my brethren, that even the very children of God themselves miss—that joy, and that peace, and that full assurance of hope, which is promised to them in the Gospel? Why are they harassed by so many doubts, and fears, and foreboding sorrows? Why are they so anxious to delay the hour of their departure by praying for its postponement? Alas! even they, the very best upon earth, are sometimes careless, and although not like the impenitent despairingly so, yet even the true penitent is often distracted in a small degree for a brief moment by the pressure of a guilty conscience, by the consciousness of sin.

O, my beloved brethren, the pressure of a guilty conscience is almost intolerable: but blessed be God, who has given His only-begotten and well-beloved Son to be our Redeemer, whose precious blood shed upon Mount Calvary is the fountain, which has been opened in Israel to wash away sin, so that if we repent and believe in Him, “though our sins be as scarlet, they shall become white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

The sum of all we have said is this:—that if we would enjoy the Christian’s privileges of the consolations of the Gospel, we must watch over our hearts and their inmost recesses to avoid every kind of sin. We must watch and pray. And here more especially would I exhort my younger friends, who are just rising into womanhood and into manhood, to be very circumspect in their conduct, and to guard themselves against the commission of even the smallest sin—and to resist in prayerful spirits, the love of the world, “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,” and all that is in the world. We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ: the young and the old, the rich and the poor, one with another. God will find out our iniquities: and if we have not repented and forsaken our sins—if we have not turned away from our wickednesses with all our hearts to believe in Jesus, if we die impenitent, and unbelieving, and unholy, when we

appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, then, "How shall we clear ourselves?"

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light, which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.

SERMON III.

SALVATION BY FAITH.

ZECHARIAH III. 4.

"And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment."

This text distinctly teaches man's unworthiness and God's goodness. The grace of God is the fountain of Salvation: and we hope that we may all of us by God's blessing be profited by considering, how God has manifested His Grace, and how He saves immortal souls.

The Holy Being, whom the Prophet Zechariah saw in this vision, was the Son of God, who co-existed with His Almighty Father from eternity, the second person of the Holy Trinity, Jesus Christ, the King of Glory; He was and is and always will be the King of Glory. He was the Angel of the Lord. Those, who stood before Him, to whom He answered and spoke, were the Holy Angels, who encompass His Throne in Heaven and who represent what His Ministers should be in His Sanctuary upon Earth, waiting and prepared with joy to fulfil all His counsels. The Angels in Heaven as well as the Ministers of Christ, who are the Stewards of the Mysteries of God upon Earth, are the instruments, which God is pleased to use for the Salvation of His chosen people: the former are ministering Spirits, sent forth to minister unto them, who are to be heirs of Salvation: "God maketh

His Angels Spirits, and His Ministers a flame of fire." "Are they not all ministering Spirits sent forth to minister for them, who shall be heirs of Salvation?" Heb. 1st ch. 7th and 14th verses. The latter are "Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us : we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." 2nd Cor., 5th ch. 20th v.

The filthy garments, which were commanded to be taken away from Joshua, the High Priest, represent guilty human nature, the sin, which intermingles with and defiles our holiest works, that concupiscence of the flesh, which remains even in the regenerate and pollutes the earthly tabernacle—and makes both priest and people unclean and consequently unworthy before God. Many individuals have an insuperable aversion to these truths ; they have a violent dislike to listen to these faithful descriptions of sorry human nature : the human heart is naturally proud and unwilling to judge itself to be so little lovely and virtuous as in the infallible word of God it is depicted. But the axe must be levelled at the root : we must hew down the pride of man's heart within every one of us, or otherwise we shall never become truly humble Christians. Human pride, whether spiritual or worldly, is an abomination to God. Amiable dispositions and benevolent actions are lovely : who does not admire them and esteem those adorned with them, who practice them daily ?—But beneath the green and beautiful bank, upon which the sweet violet grows in Spring, how often lurks concealed a brood of venomous vipers ? Virtue is beautiful, but sinful motives may be concealed in the graceful folds of its external robes. Shall we believe the flattery of our own minds and affections ?—or shall we not rather believe God and an enlightened conscience ? The perfume of praise is a delicious unction : but the Steward of the Oracles of God may not offer such a libation to perishing immortal souls : he may not anoint with it his own heart ; he may not strive to conciliate with it the favour of sinful fellow-creatures to win them over to repentance. Praise feeds human vanity, and is a disguised poison ; fatal in its effects, deadly to the

immortal soul. The natural heart of man, *in every individual* merely human, is exactly what God Himself has described it to be—"deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." We are utterly helpless, unassisted by the Grace of God, to do any one good work, acceptable and well-pleasing to God. We have considered it proper to make these few remarks upon the first clause of our text, because it is our wish to treat in this Sermon upon the doctrine in the second clause of our text, which contains the comfortable and the blessed assurance which the Lord Jesus Christ gave Joshua, that his iniquity was pardoned, joined with the consolatory promise, that his Salvation should be completed—

"And unto him he said: Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment."

We would fain here remark, that the exhortation of the Holy Apostle St. Paul is the most satisfactory comment upon our text; by which he teaches us, that it is our duty to put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and to put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Thus St. Paul teaches us, that the principles and dispositions of the soul must be changed, before there can be a change of life. These therefore must be put off, as an old garment, which has ceased to be serviceable, as a filthy garment, which is uncomely; they must be subdued, mortified, and renounced;—but it is not enough to shake off corrupt principles: the heart must not be left vacant; the soul must not be left unclad: it is not enough to cease to do evil: we must learn to do well: we must strive to discipline our hearts to obey all the commandments of God. For, though contradictory may seem the truth, yet we are exhorted by St. Paul to do ourselves, what is declared in our text shall be done for us;—by which we are taught, that it is our plain duty to be diligent in the use of all the public and private means of grace, which our heavenly Father has revealed as being acceptable to Him, and with which our Creator has mercifully supplied us for

our salvation, but yet at the same time to ascribe all the praise and glory of our salvation to Jesus Christ, to whom only, through the love of God the Father, by the sanctification of the Holy Ghost, it can be righteously ascribed.

We must not become Antinomian in principle, or licentious in practice; God's law, like God himself, is holy, just, and good, and although by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified in the sight of God, yet we are strictly forbidden to continue in sin, that grace may abound: indeed, we shall have no good evidence of the saving nature of our faith, no just ground of hope,—unless our faith be a living, fruitful faith, and our life and our whole conversation consistent with our professions.

It is true of believers, that “they are God’s workmanship;” but it is also true, that “they are created in Christ Jesus unto good works”—because Jesus gave himself for us expressly, “that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”—If this be not our character, we are only nominal Christians—if we be not, as God’s true children all are, zealous of good works, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, we have a name only to live, but our souls are still spiritually asleep,—our faith is dead, and our hope presumptuous: because “without holiness no man can see the Lord.”

We have already said, that our purpose is on this occasion to confine ourselves to the consideration of the latter member of our text, and we therefore proceed to remark

1stly. That the pardon of sin is insufficient for Salvation.

We shall not detain you long in proving this point. You know, that mercy is love or favour shown towards those who deserve wrath and punishment: mercy therefore can be conferred only upon the guilty: the innocent have no need of it; therefore when we pray for mercy, as such, we evidently acknowledge, that we have incurred the anger of God, and merit punishment.

The pardoned criminal, though freed from punishment, is not a fit

associate for the innocent and virtuous ; hence the pardon of sin, even if it be enough to give us a title to an abode in Heaven, which it is not, is not enough to make us fit to be associates of the holy inhabitants of Heaven. The crimes committed are forgiven ; but if the character of the culprit be unchanged, his nature the same, that it was before his offences were forgiven, he remains still, what he was, an offender condemned by the law, which he violated, though pardoned by mercy : he is not proved innocent : he is not acquitted : he is still depraved in heart, degenerate, and disgraced.

To pardon is an act of Sovereign mercy : to receive one pardoned into favour and love is an act of Sovereign grace.

A pardon does not put away sin—and it cannot destroy the inclination to sin ; it gives no title to a reward : it merely delivers the object from immediate punishment : but Salvation cannot be procured without a deliverance from the power as well as from the guilt of sin ; cannot be enjoyed without the gift of holiness as well as a grant of pardon ; because unless we have a right spirit renewed within us ; in one word, unless we be made new creatures, we shall continue to sin wilfully and so daily incur new guilt ; therefore is the pardon of sin alone insufficient for Salvation. We must not only be forgiven, but we must go and sin wilfully no more.

The filthy garment may be removed—but what, if we remain naked, with no humility, with no faith, with no repentance—what, if we remain poor and miserable?—We do not mean to affirm that faith and repentance save us by themselves : such a doctrine would be untrue : they do save us, but only in, by, and through the atoning merits of Jesus Christ. As soon as the sinner prostrates himself under the conviction of sin at the foot of the Cross ;—as soon as he comes, in a contrite and penitent spirit, and with a believing heart, clothed with humility to Jesus Christ for mercy, his pardon no doubt is granted. Satan may stand at his right hand to resist him : Satan may accuse him to God, and Satan may accuse him to his own conscience, and tempt

him to abstain from every effort to walk with God, by recalling to his remembrance past transgressions ;—Satan may also endeavour to hold him back from every duty of piety by suggesting to his mind unscriptural conceptions of his unworthiness to participate in Godly works on account of former iniquities. But our merciful advocate, who now sitteth on the right hand of God, exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, is unacquainted neither with our infirmities nor with Satan's devices : if we have recourse to Him in prayer, He will assuredly plead our cause with His Heavenly Father, and will by His spirit reprove Satan for us : He will say unto the Tempter by the still small voice of His Holy Spirit in our hearts—"The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan : even the Lord, that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee,—is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" Zech. iii. 2nd. Which is tantamount to saying, "Is not this a sinner saved by my Grace from those everlasting burnings, where the fire is never quenched and where the worm, which tortures the conscience, never dies : " and so the true and faithful servants of the Lord are encouraged by the Spirit of the Lord within them, to believe, that their sins being pardoned by Grace, their works will be acceptable to God, through faith, notwithstanding their remembrance of past sins and their sense of great unworthiness, which Satan would, if permitted so to do, use as clogs to hinder them from advancing on their Heavenward way.

Are then your consciences burdened with the weight of your sins ? Are you convinced of your own inability to deliver yourselves, my beloved brethren, from the dominion of sin ? Do you wish for a pardon, a free, full, unconditional pardon ? Come then to Jesus, and He will grant to you such a pardon, not because your works have merited it, but because God delights by Him to show mercy. Listen to the invitation of the Prophet Isaiah, and believe it—"Ho, every one, that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money ; come ye, buy and eat ; yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price." Isaiah lv. 1st. Listen to the invitation of our Gracious Redeemer himself, and no longer tarry out of the fold of

Jesus, the good Shepherd of Israel—"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." St. Matthew's Gospel xi., 28, 29, 30 verses.

2ndly. We observe "that the pardon of sin is granted us immediately we come unto Christ in repentance and faith."

The sick man does not usually apply to a physician for aid until he feels languor or pain, and is convinced that he cannot recover without some such help : and the sinner will not come unto Christ in prayer for pardon, and for grace to help him in time of need, until he is convinced of the guiltiness of his soul, persuaded of his own utter inability to make an atonement for his sins, and sees before him eternal death impending. But when he is convinced of his sin, and convicted in his conscience, then he falls into contrition for the past; Contrition is the beginning of Christian repentance; and God will not despise a humble and contrite heart. Contrition is the first sign of the new life, and if the contrite sinner resist not the operation of the Holy Spirit, he becomes penitent and believing, Jesus receives him into his fold, in accordance with the covenant of grace, pardons his sins, and God the Father, beholding the merits of his anointed and adorable Son, seals the pardon which Jesus has granted, with the seal of his everlasting love.—"God commendeth His love to us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."

3rdly. We observe—"That the pardon of sin is the act of Christ only, or if you please, of God in Christ."

Joshua appeared before the Son of God in the threadbare dress of one who had undergone a long captivity : in a filthy, squalid, and uncomely dress. "Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel." The penitent sinner comes to the throne of Grace for mercy with a guilty and sinful, though a sorrowful heart. Jesus might, if his will were to do it, reject his prayer and dismiss him without granting the mercy he seeks ; but Christ's word

is sure, always "yea"—and His promise faithful, eternally "Amen," and Christ has once said—"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out," St. John's Gospel vi., 37. Therefore the penitent believer is assured of obtaining a pardon : but the pardon of sin is the act of Christ only ; it is His office to forgive—He purchased forgiveness for His people by shedding His blood upon the cross. It is Jesus, who commands the filthy garments to be taken off. It is Jesus, who says to the penitent sinner, behold ! I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee. It is Jesus, who saves—"Neither is there Salvation in any other ; for there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," the Acts iv., 12. If we obtain a full pardon of sin, perhaps some individual will ask, does not that pardon entitle us to an abode in the kingdom of Heaven ? No ; you must receive further grace to be fitted for an abode amongst the holy there. The convicted felon may be pardoned, but still he is a felon and unworthy to be admitted into the society of good and honest people. The offending Courtier may be pardoned, and the sceptre of mercy held out to him by his Sovereign, but still he is an offender, unworthy of the future confidence and the renewed favour of his Prince. A sense of pardon is comfortable to a sinner, because it is an earnest of good things to come : it is a glad thing to be delivered from the punishment of sin, because it is a Spring of Hope ; but to be restored to the favour, which we, all of Adam's race, have forfeited by our sins, we must either do something ourselves to deserve it, or be recommended to it by something which has been done for us by another who is able and willing to be our mediator.

We could have done nothing ourselves to recommend us to the favour of God : neither could we change our own characters to fit us for an abode in Heaven. But blessed be God, Jesus Christ has wrought out a spotless righteousness, with which He clothes all whom He pardons, and thus clothed, the penitent is entitled to an abode in Heaven, through the righteousness of Jesus, and by the sanctification of the Holy Ghost, which Jesus also confers upon him ; his

character is changed, and he is fitted for the society of the holy, who surround the throne of Jehovah, fitted to live in Heaven. This is Salvation. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered:" blessed indeed is the heart, which the voice of Jesus thus addresses by the Holy Ghost—"Behold! I have caused thine iniquities to pass from thee." Here I would remark, that the penitent believer *is assured* (for otherwise, how can he be said to believe the word of Christ, which is "yea and amen?") *is assured*, that *his sins are pardoned*, are passed from him; and having this pledge, he has, still further, this assurance of hope, namely, "that all that is necessary to be done for the Salvation of his soul, will be done, and that Heaven will be his everlasting home;" and therefore he should allow neither the accusations of his own conscience, nor any of the malicious devices of Satan to deter him from doing good by striking his soul with disquietude. "The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin," and those who have washed in that fountain, are altogether clean; and those who have put on Christ, are altogether clothed. Discard then at once every doubt from your minds. Regard not your own feelings, which can only mislead you: pay no such particular attention to the suggestions of your own minds—suggestions often brought forth by Satan to sink you into despondence. It is well for you to be under a deep sense of your own unworthiness; but not so as to make you doubt of your Salvation, or to hinder you from pressing forward towards the mark of your high calling in Jesus Christ,—you ought rather to believe the sure promise of God, and to say—"Let God be true and every man a liar." What if some do not believe, shall their unbelief make godly faith of none effect?

Having said thus much upon the pardon of sin, which is the Mercy of God in Christ, who purchased it for us by His death upon the Cross: still further for the consolation of your souls, and to encourage you to persevere in the good way unto the end, and to go on in it, rejoicing in the hope of Salvation, I entreat you to consider the power and meaning of this word—Behold!—It calls our attention

emphatically to what follows, and is consequently a very important word in our text. When Satan is harassing your consciences by throwing many doubts into your souls; Behold! the Lamb of God—Behold! what Jesus has accomplished for your Salvation!—When sin oppresses and is a burden to your hearts; Behold! what Jesus has done for its removal! Behold! the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world: Behold! His boundless compassion! His inexhaustible mercy! His infinite and everlasting love! Behold His sure promise! Behold He says to you, as He did to Joshua, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee.—Behold, further, His promise of sanctification! You may think that in your present state you are not fit to associate with the inhabitants of Christ's Kingdom in eternal Glory: that though you have strong hope of receiving the promised pardon, almost no doubt of it, yet you feel that the flesh is so rampant and the carnal mind so struggling for superiority against the spirit, that you do scarcely expect ever to be fit to live with the Holy in Heaven? No man is perfectly holy on Earth: no mere man ever was, no man can be, so long as he is tabernacled in a body of sinful flesh. But do you love holiness? Do you desire to be righteous? Do you strive to obey God? Do you resist the Devil? Do you war against Sin? Do you pray to be transformed to the image of Jesus Christ, who is the brightness of the Glory and the express image of the person of God? It cannot then be said that you love sin: you no longer love it, and if you do not love it, you must in a measure hate it: you must disallow—disapprove—condemn it: your very doubts prove that you do not love it; and happy you! Jesus has wrought out a righteousness, a spotless righteousness, pure and without blemish—that wedding garment with which he clothes his Saints, and with which, Behold!!! he promises to clothe you!—"I will clothe thee with change of raiment. I will change thy filthy garments with a clean white robe. I will cover thee with the bright robe of my own spotless righteousness. Thou shalt be arrayed with the righteousness of my saints—with the garment of

Salvation. Blessed, indeed, blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile."

How evident now is it and how plain, that the whole work and all the glory of your Salvation belong only unto God in Christ. We are born in sin, but by Him we are created anew unto holiness. Be comforted, then, my brethren, with these truths, and lean upon Christ as upon a safe pillar: say with the patient Job, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." Behold! how Jesus has taken upon Himself the punishment due unto our sins—the chastisement by which we obtain peace! Behold! how he puts upon us His righteousness—and thus is made unto us of God not only wisdom, by His doctrines and by His example, but also righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. To have the filthy garments of sin taken from us, and the wedding garment of righteousness put over us, is a sure pledge of our peace with Jesus, and of our peace with God through Jesus: and having peace with God, we ought to live in peace with one another: we ought to love one another, and to fight the good fight of faith unto the end. Then, when our departure is approaching, we shall be able to adopt the words of the holy Paul, and with an assured hope of Heaven to say, as he did, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

O Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, be thou graciously pleased to beget within us by thy Holy Spirit, that faith which is justifying only by and through the merits of Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord, to whom with thee, O Father, and with thee, O Holy Ghost, three persons but only one God, be ascribed all the praise and glory of our Salvation, now and for evermore. Amen.

SERMON IV.

THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY, MOTIVE, AND CONSOLATION.

GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN XV., 8.

"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."

WE have chosen these words for our meditation, because they teach, what multitudes forget: they plainly declare in language intelligible to the meanest intellect, what only a very few persons are eagerly striving to perform, the Christian's duty in this life: and they also bring before our view the only worthy motive by which we ought to be governed in the strict performance of the commandments of God.

They were spoken by our blessed and adorable Redeemer to his Holy Apostles, and they form part of the instructions, which He mercifully bequeathed to us by them, a short time before He was to lay down His life for our Salvation upon the Cross.

Jesus had been expounding to them one of the most important doctrines of the Christian Church, namely, that God, His Father, is the giver of every good gift to the Church, and through it to all the members of His family upon earth; and that He himself is the first and only receiver of the Grace of the Father for the Church. He illustrated this doctrine by representing himself as the true Vine: His Father as the Husbandman; and His Apostles, as well as all the other members of His Church, as the branches, which derive all their beauty, vigour, and fruitfulness from the root by the sap carried through the trunk of the tree: by which, we learn, that the affection

for virtue, that is the inclination, the will, and the power to produce good fruit from an affection for it, is the work in our hearts of the Holy Spirit, which is given to us by the Father through His Son Jesus Christ; and thus we are taught, that Jesus is the only channel through which God communicates Mercy and Grace to man; that Jesus is the sole and living fountain of Salvation; the author and finisher by the Holy Spirit, which has been given to him for our sanctification without measure, and which flows through him down from Heaven into the believers' heart—that Jesus is both the Author and finisher of all the good works that are or can be done in an acceptable manner to God by His disciples. “I am the Vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing:” and further on in our text, he adds—“Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.”

If you wish, my brethren beloved, to learn, what is the Christian's duty, if you are reading with an humble and teachable disposition to learn only truth, that you may become wise unto Salvation through faith, you must lift up your hearts in fervent prayer to Almighty God, and implore him to make his own word, by the sanctifying influence of His Holy Spirit, a blessing to your immortal souls. The word of God is the incorruptible seed, which whether Paul plant or Apollos water, only the Spirit of God, which inspired it, can make fruitful. Our text contains three parts, which we purpose to consider in the following order, namely:—

1stly. The Christian's duty “to bear *much* fruit.”

2ndly. The Christian's proper motive to perform his duty, “to glorify God.”

3rdly. The Christian's consolation, “he is a true and acknowledged disciple of Jesus Christ.”

1stly. The Christian's duty.

The Christian's duty is to bear much fruit. “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear *much* fruit.” Is this the Christian's duty

indeed? Where then are the Christians in our parishes? Where are the Christians bearing much fruit, fruit acceptable to God, fruit visible to angels, fruit serviceable to man? In whom do we find the piety of a primitive Christian, in what house every inmate walking in the commandments of Jesus Christ? Where is this plentiful harvest of rich Christian fruit to be reaped, —where is it growing—where deposited? whose morals does it enrich, whose life does it adorn, from whose heart does this spirit of Christian duty send forth this abundance of Christian fruit? Whose conscience does it comfort, whose faith does it strengthen, whose hope does it brighten, whose soul does it elevate unto Heaven? Christian charity, the root of which is Christian faith, dignifies the human character and gives peace to the immortal soul: as indeed, the fruit of charity is peace; and thanks be to God, that we do see some little fruit of Christian benevolence and Christian piety growing ripe around us: but these visible fruits are only few,—yet “the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, his countenance doth behold the upright.”

My beloved brethren, pungent and unpleasant though the question be, yet we must repeat it again and again—nay, would you commend, would God approve, if his Ambassador were in his solemn and Holy Sanctuary to use to you the words of flattery? To probe the conscience is a painful operation, but it is better to inflict the pain of that operation than to leave one immortal soul to perish under a delusion. We shall then reiterate our question without hesitation, and without pausing to inquire, if it will be agreeable to the human heart: it is necessary, and that is enough to justify its repetition. What is the Christian's duty? It is to bear not only some—not only a little fruit, barely enough fruit to attract the praises of man; barely enough to receive the thanks of the Fatherless and Widow; barely enough to satisfy the yearnings of an awakened conscience, but it is to bear *much* fruit, daily to labour in bringing forth good fruit; to be *always abounding* in the work of the Lord.

O God, what one of a thousand amongst us, will be able to stand before thee on the dreadful Day of Judgment? O God, what shall we, many of us, be able to answer thee, when thou shalt say unto us, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick and in prison, and ye visited me not." Mat. xxv. 41, 42, 43.

My beloved brethren, let us not turn away our inquiries from these things—it will serve us to think of them now—to apply the searching test unto our hearts now, to find out, whether our faith be genuine, whether our professions be true—whether our religion be sound. For "pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this; to visit the Fatherless and Widows in their affliction, and to keep himself *unspotted* from the world." James i. 27. If there were no Heaven promised as a reward to such works of Mercy, and as the future home of those who preserve their souls in such a state of holiness, yet the tear of joy shed upon the hand of benevolence, and the blessing of thankfulness which follows that tear from the heart of the Widow in her affliction; if there were no mansion of bliss prepared in the regions beyond the grave for such as delight to do the Angel-works of Charity, yet the smile of gratitude, which lights up the countenance of the forlorn and desolate Orphan, when his ear first hears the sweet music of pity—first catches the sound of the voice of Christian love compassionating his destitute condition, and when his eye first sees the hand of Christian Mercy extended to help him; Oh—if there were no Heaven after death—yet such a spectacle as this would be a sufficient reward—such a sight as this must give to the pure in heart a pleasure all but equal to the joy of Heaven.

There is a pleasure to the man unspotted from the world,—he has a pleasure inconceivable in doing such works: they are fruits of

joy, as sweet to the giver as they are to the receiver ; yea, sweeter : for as our Lord said—"It is more blessed to give than to receive."

God would have all men to learn, and be ye therefore willing to learn, my brethren, that it is not sufficient barely to refrain from sin, even if we do refrain from sin : that is a negative holiness, which will not satisfy the demands of God—which will only in a very small degree, if at all, do good to our neighbour—and which never will, and *never can* give abiding peace to the quick-sighted, when once awakened, conscience of the immortal soul. No man is innocent in all things,—no man is *conscious* of innocence in all things ;—in some things, through the infirmities of human nature, we all do occasionally, yea often offend : we all have offended God, and the guilt of sin stains the purest of our thoughts and blemishes the holiest and very best of our actions, so much so, that it has been truly said that "our repentances need to be repented of, and the very tears of our repentance to be washed in the blood of Jesus to be acceptable unto God." Let me, however, exhort you to resist the devil and he will flee from you : oppose the works of the flesh which are manifest—knowing that they which do them cannot inherit the kingdom of God, and cultivate with industry, with watchfulness, with steadfastness, with zeal, and in frequent earnest prayer at the Throne of Grace, more than you ever hitherto have done, the fruit of the spirit which is "Love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance : against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections, passions, and lusts." Gal. v., 22, 23, 24.

Such will give you a small, and that too only a very small, notion of a Christian's duty : for a larger conception and a more particular account of it, you must have recourse to the Bible, and at home in your closets read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest its sacred truths, its precepts as well as its doctrines, and so learn the will of God to do it. Now "whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men ; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward

of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. Colossians iii., 23, 24.

2ndly. Our text brings before us the Christian's proper motive for performing his duty: namely, "Herein is God glorified—that ye bear *much* fruit." To glorify God is the motive which from a feeling of gratitude actuates the Christian, and makes him eager to bear *much* fruit. Whatever end begets within us the desire to work in a way to attain that end is a motive: the end, which the faithful Christian desires to attain by his obedience to the law of God, is to glorify God; hence he does good to man to give glory to God: this is his chief, if not his only motive: but, my brethren, how few of us can lay our hands upon our hearts and solemnly declare that our principal motive for doing deeds of mercy, and for joining in works of Christian charity, is mainly to give glory to God!

Philosophers and Moralists have invented a variety of motives to induce their disciples to practice Virtue and to shun Vice: but, notwithstanding all their efforts, Vice would continue rampant in the world, and Virtue be all but unknown amongst mankind, if a higher motive to cultivate the one and to resist the other, than is to be found in their eloquent persuasions, had not been supplied by the Gospel. The Gospel in the Bible supplies the only worthy motive for doing good actions; and our actions are either good or bad in the Divine judgment, acceptable to God or otherwise, according to the motive for which they are done.

A charitable deed may always be useful to a fellow-creature; but if it have been done from a wrong motive, that is, an unscriptural motive, although it will still deserve and most likely obtain human approbation, the praise of man, which is due to it, yet it will not be acceptable to God, because it does not spring from a holy faith; and whatsoever is not acceptable to God, by the sentence of God, is sin, even as St. Paul also teaches us that "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Romans xiv., 23.

And now, my beloved brethren, will you be persuaded by the word

of God to try all your actions and to prove their quality by this searching test? What are your motives? This is a question which only your own consciences can satisfactorily answer : yes, the High and Lofty One, who inhabiteth Eternity, he knoweth our motives; for he trieth the reins and searcheth the heart. Do you ever search your own hearts? Do you ever open their doors, and look narrowly with a jealous eye into those secret recesses, in which the appetites, the affections, the imaginations, the emotions, the passions, in which all the motives of your external conduct are wrapt up together, and lie concealed? God forbid, that any individual should be deterred by any words of ours from the performance of good works : even some works, which the hypocrite does, are good in the sight of man, and commendable, because they do good to his neighbour : but as his motive is bad, for he does them oftentimes only to deceive,—to make the admiring world believe him to be really,—what under the mask he wears he externally seems to be,—but what in his own heart, he knows he is not,—in sooth, a religious disciple of Jesus Christ,—therefore because his motive is bad, his gift of charity is not an acceptable offering to Jehovah ; and his works, though bearing such a strong resemblance to the good works of the true Christian, do not advance his soul one iota nearer to the Kingdom of Heaven. All Hypocrisy is hateful to God. To glorify God is the only worthy motive for the performance of Christian duty, even as the blessed Jesus himself has taught us in that incomparably beautiful Sermon which he delivered on the mountain to his disciples—by this exhortation, “Let your light *so* shine before men, that they *may see* your good works, *and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.*” Matthew v. 16.

We are commanded by this rule to let men see our good works—not to gratify our own hearts—not as an offering of pleasure to our vanity and pride—not as a contenting sacrifice on the altar of our Envy—not for ostentation, to attract the praise and admiration of human tongues—not to humour any one single secret passion—in one word, not to seek our own glory : these are not the motives,

by which Jesus persuades his disciples to do *much* good, and to *bear* much fruit; but he exhorts them to cast away every selfish feeling, and to do good in simplicity without grudging—only to *glorify* their Father, who is in Heaven: and “Herein is my Father *glorified*, that ye *bear* *MUCH* fruit.”

I will not add another word to detain you upon this part of our text; but I will proceed to bring before you

3rdly. The Christian’s consolation. “So shall ye be my disciples.”

Whatsoever conduces to the peace and joy of the Christian in this life is his consolation: a good Hope of future blessedness must be of great help in confirming his peace and enlarging his joy; to know that he is a disciple of Christ is a knowledge, that must enrich him with such a good hope, and so he possesses in the enjoyment of this Hope of everlasting life, a consolation for every trouble; a consolation, which the world cannot give, and which Satan cannot take away. Do you then, my brethren beloved, experience this consolation, when trials overcast you with sorrow?—have you ever had any taste of it in your hearts? Do you believe—do you feel an assured hope—do you know, that you are the disciples of Christ?

In the Holy Bible are many encouraging promises given by the Almighty in much mercy for the support and consolation of his Redeemed People: these promises are their birthright-inheritance; they are the children of God, “which are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” St. John’s Gospel i. 13. They have received this privilege of Sonship from God, and they are the heirs of all the promises of God. God gave these promises to strengthen the weak, to comfort the sorrowful, and to heal the wounds of the broken in heart; and the penitent believer, who is a true disciple of Jesus, is not only invited and permitted, but is also commanded to apply them to his own use: therefore this is rich knowledge and a great consolation in this life, to know that we have not only been admitted by the Regeneration of Baptism into the congregation of Christ’s flock, but also to be

assured by our fruits of faith, that we have really “come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of Angels, to the general Assembly and Church of the first-born, which are enrolled in Heaven.” Hebrews xii. 22, 23. In one word, that we are the children of God, and so heirs of the promises of God.

This knowledge, happy and blessed indeed as it must prove, is attainable only by the rule, which our Saviour has indicated in our text, by the fruit of our faith—its quantity and its quality—the actions of our life; and our motives for doing them: these are the only evidences, from which we can deduce any safe conclusion of our present condition, and upon which we can establish our future Hope of Heaven through faith in Jesus Christ: by them our faith will be justified, as our souls are justified by our faith, that is, by the Righteousness of Jesus, who is the object of our faith.

We may make many and loud professions of leading a religious life; we may clothe ourselves with a dazzling outward garment of Godliness; we may do many commendable works; we may be as to external appearances adorned like the very children of God—controlling our passions, and virtuous in our actions—but if our Consciences whisper, (the whisper of the Conscience is, though only a still small voice, terrible often as the thunders of God, which were heard on Mount Sinai,) if our Consciences whisper, that our motives are unholy, we cannot yet determine that our state is safe: for near, as we seem to others to be to God, we probably know in our own hearts, that we are afar off from true righteousness, and that we are not earnestly striving in prayer by faith to draw nigh to God. But when the humble and penitent Christian examines his conversation—that is, his deeds—his words—his passions—his affections—his desires—his hopes—his feelings—his thoughts—and can with sincerity say, that “his conversation is in Heaven,” and that his guiding motive in his endeavours to obey the commandments of God is the glory of God, as well as the good of mankind,—when this

man, notwithstanding the mixture of worldly passions and appetites, which will sometimes intrude and contaminate his purest motive and his holiest deed, experiences both from what is passing within his own bosom, unknown to his fellow man, but witnessed by his God, and from what flows out of his heart in streams of benevolence to those who need his compassion; when this humble and contrite man, I repeat, sees the holy fruit of righteousness, which has budded within him, and being matured, has been put forth to be a blessing to others, who are without and around him, then he has an indubitable—an undecivable evidence—"the Spirit beareth witness with his spirit, that he is a child of God:" the children of the family of God acknowledge him as a brother: the "*much*" fruit he bears proves to himself, and to all who closely observe his path, that he has become a true disciple of Christ; and he knows and is assured, that when he shall finish his course, there is laid up for him a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give him upon the day, when he shall appear in glory at the end of all time, surrounded by the Hosts of Heaven, to judge the world. This is the Christian's richest Hope—this is the Christian's most precious consolation: this is his joy on earth, as it will be his peace in Heaven.

There are times and occasions, my beloved brethren, in every Christian's course, when he needs a consolation fuller, richer, deeper, than any earthly thing or creature can give him: the kind actions of affectionate kindred—the generous attention of faithful friends—the welcome condolence of sympathizing acquaintances—may and do help to assuage the bitterness of sorrow, and raise a momentary gleam of joy in the wounded heart in the day of affliction, in the night of black clouds, when it is our portion to weep in the house of mourning: but in those darker struggles, which the soul of the Christian sometimes undergoes—when Satan brings up in array against him all his legions to harass, and if possible, overthrow him, he needs a consolation deeper and more abiding to strengthen his heart and to

deliver him triumphantly out of the agony:—if *he can only hope* that he is a true disciple of Christ, he will have much ease—but if *he know*, that he is one indeed, then though his body may be racked by sorrow, affliction, and pain, he feels assured, that He, who is able, is also willing, and is close at hand to help him, and that his cry to his Redeemer for aid, will be answered by the presence and voice of the Holy Ghost, sanctifying his heart within him, that the aid he needs shall be vouchsafed.

Thus the knowledge, that he is a true disciple of Christ, is the consolation of a Christian: it is his peace through life—his richest joy in health—his guide in prosperity—his support in adversity—his consolation in sorrow and upon the bed of languishing, in sickness—it is his consolation in life, his consolation in the hour of death, and will be his consolation until he receive the Crown of Righteousness upon the Judgment Day.

We have now briefly shown you, my beloved brethren, what is the Christian's duty—what is the Christian's proper motive for performing it—and also what is the Christian's consolation. Have you received any good from these instructions? Have we been so happy as to succeed in kindling in your hearts a holy desire by the Spirit of God, the desire to bear *much* fruit?

Do you ask me, how you are to bear much fruit—what you are to do? Do everything, which God approves—everything, which an enlightened conscience prompts—everything, which Charity suggests,—strive to do everything, which God commands. Learn to do your duty in that state of life, in which it has pleased God to place you, according to the talent, which God has entrusted to you—so using the means, which have been bestowed upon you—whether they be more or less—do good to the glory of God: with fidelity and truth serving those, to whom you are subject upon earth, not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good-will doing service as to the Lord, and not to men—from whom you will receive a full and abun-

dant reward. Our poor and needy relations have the first claim upon our benevolence, but not the only claim: whether we have little or whether we have much, we ought to be willing to show, that we thank God for what we have, by helping those, who have less:—if we can spare but so much as the widow's mite to a child of poverty, we ought to give the widow's mite to the glory of God. How are you to bear much fruit? What are you to do? Look around you. Are there no widows in affliction?—are there no orphans near your dwellings? Can you find no poor, destitute, suffering fellow-creature to help to clothe? no hungry to help to feed? no sick sometimes to visit? Do Justice and love Mercy: do not sit always at home with folded arms or clasped hands—vainly exclaiming—Oh, that I could find something to do to glorify God: but go forth, and search about, and see, if in the cottages of the poor you cannot find some object, suffering in desolate poverty, upon whom to exercise your Mercy. Go forth and enjoy the luxury of doing good.

Extend your help also to every sacred institution: help to support and build up the Church into which you have been baptized: help to support the Religious Societies, which have been established to spread the knowledge of the glorious Gospel abroad amongst the Heathen: be ready to aid and to promote every truly Christian project. Bear much fruit, and you shall glorify God: so glorifying God, you shall be a disciple of Jesus, you shall be rewarded with a disciple's reward—you shall inherit the Kingdom of Heaven, and find Mercy, nay, glory, and honour, and immortality, in that day when Jesus shall come in glory to judge the world.

Grant unto us, Almighty God, thy grace, that we may be both inclined and enabled to glorify thee by bearing much fruit, and so become the true disciples of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, to whom with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, three Persons, but only one God, be all the praise and glory of every good thought, word, and deed, now and for evermore. Amen.

SERMON V.

FUNERAL SERMON.—CHRIST IS OUR LIFE.

COLOSSIANS III. 4.

"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."

The vanity of all earthly things is most forcibly described in the word of God. Riches, power, human wisdom, beauty, and all worldly glory, yea, even human friendship and the natural life, to which all that is perishing belongs, are there brought before us in their true and proper colours; they are portrayed as things of short and uncertain duration; so short and uncertain, that they cannot give to the Immortal Soul any solid happiness. They cannot satisfy its large desires: they cannot fill with joy that Spirit, which God breathed into the nostrils of man, and which being, like God who gave it, imperishable, cannot feel contentment in any creature inferior to itself, cannot rest content with things that pass away, with pleasures that endure only for a season.

On the other hand, the vastness of that joy—the immensity of that eternal glory, which awaits the Immortal Soul in Heaven, is described in language equally strong and eloquent, and is placed in rich and full contrast against those corruptible things, which minister only to our temporal enjoyment and perish in the using, and that too, for the express purpose of winning our affections from such

unworthy objects, even from those vanities, which most often only foster sinful pride, to the enduring riches of God's goodness.

The riches of eternal love only can fill the longing desires of the immortal soul with joy—its own existence is eternal : and, as an immortal Being, it cannot find durable happiness in anything short of eternal Life in Heaven. It is therefore mercifully vouchsafed to the Christian, to cheer him on his Heavenward way, and to encourage his perseverance in it, to have, though not upon Earth in perfection, the reality—yet it is vouchsafed to him, to have even in this life, even before he passes through the dark valley of the shadow of death, a Hope and foretaste of that eternal weight of Glory, which shall be given to him hereafter : a hope and foretaste, all but equal to the reality, for it is rooted in his faith, which “is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Heb. xi. 1st. He knows, that, although the full enjoyment of future eternal blessings is for a short space of time withheld from him, yet they will at length be conferred upon him : he feels, that a new life has been communicated by the Spirit of God to his soul, and that his everlasting life has had its beginning ; and, because he believeth in the Son of God, he has an assured hope, that “When Christ who is our life shall appear, that then he will also appear with Him in glory, and be one of the exulting and happy myriads, who shall crowd around His throne of Glory with songs of Praise and hymns of Triumph, celebrating the Victories of God and the Lamb.

Our text is thus consolatory to the Christian ; his Hope of eternal life is in Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life : his Life comes from Christ—is lodged and is preserved in Christ. Our text is indeed very rich in consolation : it is rich also in persuasion, what life can be so secure as the life under the guardianship of an Almighty Redeemer—shall we then any longer absent ourselves from Christ's fold ? and separate ourselves from his care ? Our text promises imperishable glory to all true Christians : it promises them safety, it promises them security, and so persuades them to set

their affections upon things above, and not on things on the Earth, because "When Christ, who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory."

Three important truths, all fundamental doctrines of our religion, are declared in our text.

1stly. That Christ is the life of the Christian—is "Our life" in a sense higher than that, in which He may also be called the life of all creatures that breathe.

2ndly. That Christ will appear at the appointed period in Glory.

3rdly. That all who have lived by Him, that is, by His doctrines, precepts, and example; in Him, that is, in entire reliance upon the merits of the atoning Sacrifice, which He offered of himself upon the Cross; and to Him, that is, to the honour and praise upon earth of His Holy and Reverend Name, shall also appear with Him in Glory.

Is not this last Truth of sufficient power to awaken our attention to the eternal realities which are promised by it? Is not the second Truth, combined with the last, sufficiently distinct to deter us from misplacing our affections upon those earthly things, which minister so much and so evilly to the sinful desires and appetites of the flesh? Is it not emphatic enough to keep us back from the commission of those wickednesses, which Christ shall appear in Glory, to judge, condemn, and eternally punish? Is it not encouraging enough to incite us to the performance of those duties, which Christ shall appear in Glory to acknowledge, as done in His name, to approve and reward? "The Wages of Sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans vi. 23.

Is not the first Truth also, though mentioned only incidentally, quite plain enough to teach us, where and of whom to seek for that Life, which will enable us to live in the favour of God upon Earth, with a steadfast hope of attaining everlasting Life in Heaven. "Here we have no continuing City." How emphatic ought this Voice to be in our ears to-day!—When we look around and behold

that narrow house—It is the voice of them, who rest there;—a Voice from the dead,—from that cold* Vault, where now sleep the ashes of him, who but a few brief days ago was in all the energies of life, actively doing good,—the ashes of him, whom we all so much admired, loved, and esteemed, with the dust of her, who fell asleep in Jesus a few short years before him. Listen to their voice, for they say to us, “Here we have no continuing City.” The Earth is not our home; but “the gift of God is eternal Life through Jesus Christ our Lord;” and so Heaven is our Eternal Home.

1stly. We remark that Jesus Christ is our Life.

I shall not stop to prove, that we owe even our natural Life to Him; that all Earth’s inhabitants are indebted to Him for health, and Life, and every other allowable enjoyment: every Christian ought to know, that “in Him we live, and move, and have our being;” for “we are His Offspring.” If the Son of God had not interceded for man, man would have been instantly utterly destroyed in the day that Adam sinned. “Sin entered into the world, and Death by Sin;” but a remedy was found, and a deliverance by the interposition of Jesus Christ from the otherwise inviolable Justice of God: God had pronounced this sentence before Adam fell: “For in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.” Genesis ii. 17. Man did eat of the forbidden tree, and incurred the guilt, and merited the punishment of disobedience; but by the intervention of the Son of God the punishment was modified, and the covenant of Grace and the law of Redemption were entered into and confirmed in the Counsels of Heaven, under which God the Father would be able to remain Just, and yet be the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus: for all of the Offspring of Adam, who have been, are being, and still to be saved, are so saved by the merits of the promised Redeemer, who came and died, and rose from the dead, and has

* LORD BUTE is buried near his former Lady, in a grave in the Vault beneath the Communion Table in the Chancel of the Parish Church of Kirtlinge, in Cambridgeshire.

ascended into Heaven, where He now is a Prince and a Saviour. Thus Death, the punishment of disobedience, which was still to be inflicted, was softened in its terrors, was deferred, and by the mediation of Jesus, was made in reality a way of escape from the death of Sin, and has become the passage into eternal life; so that the Grave is now to the Christian only the Porch, through which he passes into Heaven. Thus natural Death is still our portion for sin; but against eternal Death a remedy has been found, an all-efficient remedy: Jesus Christ has removed the curse of the law; has extracted the sting from Death; and has wrested the Victory from the Grave; and Man, with all the creatures upon Earth, yea, the whole Creation exists, continues in being to-day by the intercession and for the merits of the Son of God. All men are indebted for all things to Jesus, the Son of God;—and all things that breathe are indebted to Him for natural Life, even as all believers are indebted to Him for spiritual Life; and He must reign till He hath put all enemies under his feet. O, how wretched! eternally wretched shall we be, if we waste the brief space of time, which has been saved to us between the cradle and the grave, only in the follies of the world, only in the pleasures of sin, only in the grovelling pursuits of those, “whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.” The Christian’s thoughts, the Christian’s desires, the Christian’s hope, the Christian’s heart, with all its most ardent affections, ought to be, where Christ, who is his Life, dwells. The Christian’s conversation will be and is in Heaven.

Let us not forget then, that we owe every thing, natural Life with all temporal good, to Jesus Christ, and with grateful hearts let us so use, as we are permitted to use the good things of this world, as not abusing them; but, as it would be extremest folly to place any fixed reliance upon their endurance, especially with such an example immediately near and before us of the suddenness, with which we may be snatched away from them, and they all cease in a moment to

be either necessary for our use, or capable of giving us further pleasure. Let us not build our hope of happiness upon any of these earthly things; let us not sinfully place our confidence in them; but rather let us be taught by the sudden event, which has caused our present sorrow, to remember and follow this word of the Lord: "For thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the Earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." Jeremiah ix. 23, 24.

And my beloved brethren, can we love God, and yet not love these things in which God delights? Can we love them, and yet not practise them? Can we love God, and at the same time take pleasure in those things which God hates, which He abominates? Can we love God and hate those things, and despise those people, and shun those ways, which God loves? If we love God, shall we not, must we not delight in those very things in which He delights, in loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness?—and in those gracious persons, whom He has chosen to be His people? Can we hope to be, can we desire to be the associates in Heaven of those whom we have shunned, despised, mocked, and pointed the finger of scorn at upon earth? Be persuaded to think deeply, to think searchingly upon these questions, and do not try to cut short the train of thought which they are calculated to originate in your minds, but pursue the enquiry until you find your hearts relaxing from the deadly but tenacious grasp with which they are clinging to the perishing vanities of Time.

The Apostle seems to have written the truth in our text for the express purpose of weaning our affections from earthly things, and therefore have I considered it my duty to dwell so long upon them, and to press you so urgently to transfer your confidence from these perishable possessions of Time, from these idols of the worldly-minded to Jesus, who sitteth exalted at the right hand of God, with power to

grant unto all those who come unto Him the inheritance of immortal life. Turn ye, then, turn ye from all these lying vanities—turn ye, then, turn ye to Christ, who is our life,—“Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man, his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.” Do not delay this work—do not postpone this duty—to-morrow may be too late. “Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for ye know not what a day may bring forth.” To-morrow you may be, what those now are, who sleep in that dark vault: the grave cannot praise God: Death cannot celebrate His mercies: they that go down into the pit cannot hope to be converted by His truth: Now is the accepted time—*now* is the day of Salvation; and now God is waiting to hear your prayers, ready to accept your offerings, and willing to save your souls; but to-morrow your everlasting doom, by the unsparing hand of Death, may be unalterably, irrevocably fixed.

We are accustomed sometimes to call that our Life, which is the support of life, as well as that, upon which we place our happiness in Life; we sometimes call the effect by the name, which expresses the cause, and so in our text, Christ, who is the Author of our Spiritual life and the giver of Eternal life, is called by the Apostle our Life; because without him we are dead in trespasses and in sins—without him, that is apart from him, we can do nothing spiritually good, nothing acceptable to God. The end of Spiritual Life is Eternal Glory; but we shall never attain this end, it will never be reached by us, unless the incorruptible seed of the word of God is sown in our hearts, by which the life, which Jesus Christ communicates with the Holy Spirit, is begun: the first fruits of this new life are repentance and faith,—and the fruit of faith are love to God and love to all our fellow creatures; we love God, because he has first loved us, and we love our fellow creatures, because they are the objects of our Father’s love. Therefore is Jesus called the Life of the Christian, because He purchased this life by dying upon the Cross for us; because He imparts to the longing soul the principle of life: He is the Author as

well as the finisher of our faith : because He obtained for us by His mediation the Grace of God—because he bestows that Grace upon us by which we repent, believe, and are saved—because He communicates to our souls the Spirit of God, which helps us to render the fruit of unfeigned obedience to the commandments of God ; because He enables us to resist and overcome the temptations of the sinful world, the flesh and the Devil ; because in the sorrows and disappointments, in the troubles and adversities of life, when our spirits are cast down and dejected by many disquietudes, when we are full of distress, doubt and anxiety, He visiteth us in our agony, and speaketh Peace for our consolation : He heals the wounded spirit : He comforts the broken in heart ; He upholdeth those in joy, who have not their portion upon Earth. In all things spiritual, Jesus is our Life. He is also our Life, by having set us an example how to live. Oh, that His example, which is so beautiful and so very lovely, for He went about daily doing good—from house to house, from village to village, from town to town,—He went about seeking out the helpless and poor and wretched to do them good. Oh, that His example might beget in us a desire to follow it—might beget in us the holy desire, which pervaded the heart of the Psalmist, when he exclaimed—“ One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after ; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and inquire in His temple.” Psalm xxvii. 4. (God grant, that we may all be brought into the fold of this good Shepherd of Israel : to dwell in his house—to behold and to admire His beauty and to imitate it, as we see it shining forth in His own and in the life of His children, that we may be of the living people, who worship God through Him in Spirit and in Truth. Lastly, Jesus Christ is our Life, because by His power our dead bodies shall be raised at the last great day—“ When all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good to the Resurrection of Life, and they that have done evil, unto the Resurrection of Damnation.” St. John’s Gospel v., 28, 29. Then shall He

give His faithful followers the reward of their labours—then in a moment—in the twinkling of an eye—at the last trump—when the trumpet shall sound, they shall be raised incorruptible and immortal: Death will then be swallowed up in victory, O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory? for then Christ shall clothe them with Eternal Life. Thus, my beloved brethren, Jesus Christ is in every particular the life of the Christian: He is “the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.”

From what has been said, my beloved brethren, you may learn that it is your duty to endeavour, by God’s Grace, to withdraw your affections from earthly objects; and that it is your privilege to be allowed to place them on those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God: these are the treasures which you are exhorted to seek and which you ought daily to seek.

You will also learn, that if you wish to obtain eternal life and to be cheered on your way with the hope of it, you must devote your time and your talents, as prescribed in the Gospel, to Jesus: you must daily live above the world upon Jesus—in watchfulness and in prayer, in holiness and in self-examination: in one word, that a religious life can be maintained only by faith in Jesus Christ, and that faith in Jesus Christ can be preserved from shipwreck only by habitual, fervent, daily invocations to Him for it, whose gift it is:—“For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” Ephesians ii. 8. “This is then the foundation, whereupon the frame of the Gospel is erected; that very Jesus, whom the Virgin conceived of the Holy Ghost, whom Simeon embraced in his arms—whom Pontius Pilate condemned—whom the Jews crucified—whom the Apostles preached—He is Christ the Lord, the only Saviour of the World: other foundation can no man lay.”* He is our life in time: He will be our life throughout eternity. Praise ye the Lord.

* Hooker.

2ndly. We learn that Christ will appear at the appointed period, in Glory, to Judge the World.

Christ is now hid for a brief moment from us, although He is always present, with us and in us, by the Holy Ghost : now, the Heavens contain His human nature, exalted and dignified, and incorruptible, at the right hand of God : the Heavens contain Him ; but He will appear with His Holy Angels, both in His own Glory and in His Father's Glory. He shall sit upon the throne of His Glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations. " Behold, He cometh with clouds ; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him." I will not detain you on this occasion with any more elaborate proof of the doctrine of a future Judgment. Let this quotation suffice, and with it let us pray God to imprint the truth it contains upon our minds—to engrave it upon our hearts—to infuse it into our souls, and to grant that it may be unto us " the savour of life unto life," as it must and will be, to those who perish in their sins, incurably " the savour of death unto death." We shall stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ : the dead, small and great, shall stand before God ; for the sea shall give up the dead which are in it ; and death and the grave shall deliver up the dead which are in them ; and we shall all be judged, every man according to his works. How great, then, is our folly now, if we neglect our present opportunity and so miss the reward of righteousness ! How wretchedly foolish is it to postpone a matter so confessedly paramount, and to engage ourselves about earthly trifles—how egregiously foolish to neglect the religious life and to labour after earthly riches, which perish in the using—which moth and rust corrupt, as much as, the love of them corrupts the heart,—how foolish to labour after them with more industry and with more eager zeal than is consistent with the religious life ! Riches cannot ransom our souls from death ;—Inquire of the dead, and the voice from their tomb will be, " The only riches worth the seeking are the riches of God's Grace." Oh ! it is wiser to be constant in watchfulness over our hearts and in prayer to God,—yes, how much

wiser to be anxious to obtain an inheritance amongst the Saints, in whose society we believe our departed friend to be now rejoicing. Has not the voice of God been sufficiently emphatic, loud enough to awaken us from Sin and the love of it? Has not God taken him, who, by his life, as far as we could judge, was so well prepared, to warn us, who are living in careless thoughtlessness of eternal things, quite unprepared? Surely the suddenness, with which in an unexpected moment he was summoned to vacate his temporal dignities, and to resign all his magnificent, and all his vast earthly possessions, ought to warn us. Can we be so near that grave, in which he sleeps, as we now are—so near that Vault, in which repose the ashes of him, whose memory *all of us* have such good reason to love with affectionate gratitude, and whose character *we* must *always* respect with reverential testimony to its excellence—can we look into that tomb, and not be warned? Surrounded, as we are here, with so many memorials of his benevolence, let us strive to draw out of the very sorrowful affliction into which his sudden death has plunged us, that lesson, which it is first of all intended to teach us, that “here we have no continuing City”—and let us henceforth renounce, as it will be the wisest thing we can do, let us renounce henceforth the love of all Earthly vanities—the world, the flesh, and the devil, and let us, as our kind benefactor, by the example he has bequeathed to us, has taught us to do—“Let us prepare to meet our God :” so that when Jesus shall appear, we may have a sure expectation of seeing him, and of being also with him in joy, near Jesus too : for if we be now warned, and do become, by the Grace of God, thus wise, “Then when Jesus, who is our Life shall appear, we shall also appear with Him in glory.”

This brings us to the third Truth, which is this, that they who live in faith upon the promises of God, and in obedience to the commandments of God, that all, who live thus by Jesus, in Jesus, and to Jesus—shall also appear with Him in Glory.

Of all the myriads, who will appear in Glory at the last day, not

one shall ever afterwards, for one single moment, be ever again unhappy: that Glory, which shall be conferred upon the Saints on the Judgment day, will be only the beginning of the Eternal weight of Glory reserved in Heaven for them, who love God. What stronger motive can be given to you, my beloved brethren, to induce you to lead diligently a religious life?—to induce you to seek to obtain at once an interest in the merits of Jesus Christ?—to persuade you and move you to be kind, and tender-hearted, and forgiving one to another—to be benevolent towards your brothers and sisters upon Earth, in honour preferring one another? We do not wish to confound, what God has separated, or to condemn, what God has appointed. Earthly distinctions of rank are necessary for the good of all, and unavoidable in common human society, for otherwise the world would be filled with disorder, clamour, and confusion: but Earthly distinctions of rank will and can have no place in Heaven. In the Church of Christ we are all of one Brotherhood and of one Sisterhood. “Have we not all one Father?”—the rich and the poor? the Prince and the Subject? the Noble and the Peasant? Let us then strive to live together in peace before God now upon Earth, as they should, who are hoping to live together, as a Redeemed family, in peace before God hereafter in Heaven. Hath not one God created us? Why do we then deal treacherously every man against his brother, each one of us, endeavouring to over-reach his neighbour?—Why do we, who call ourselves Christians, thus forget our early vows?—Why by treachery do we profane the covenant of our Fathers?—Why do we deny the prayer of the destitute Widow?—Why shut our eyes to the tears of the friendless Orphan?—Why do we harden our hearts against the cries of meagre poverty, and the sorrows and pangs of those who are pining in sickness? Do we think, that God does not observe—that God does not remember—that God will not judge us for these iniquities? or have we set our hearts, like flints, in defiance against God? Can we neglect all the duties of religion, and yet hope to escape the condemnation of the wicked? Can we despise

all the commandments of God, and yet hope to appear with Christ in Glory?

There will be an innumerable assembly out of every rank, out of every nation upon Earth, appear with Christ in glory. There will be the Holy Patriarchs, who, although they lived before His advent, yet believed in the promises of God, and through the shadows, which were emblems of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, saw him, who was the substance of them, saw Jesus and believed in the promised Redeemer: there will be the Holy Apostles, who traversed land and water to publish far and wide the glad tidings of Salvation—there will be the Blessed Company of Martyrs, who laid down their lives for the love of Christ—there will be the faithful confessors, who in the front of danger, refused to deny the Lord that bought them—there will be the Kings, who have been nursing Fathers, and the Queens, who have been nursing Mothers to the Church—there will be the Noble and Highborn, who, with child-like dispositions like him, whose loss we are lamenting, submitted to the yoke of Jesus, and in humility of heart bore the cross of affliction, in patient submission to God's will—there will be the rich and the wise—the Mighty Man and the Man of Valour, who have used their talents to the glory of God—and there will be the destitute widow—yes, the poorest, the meanest, the most despised upon Earth of the offspring of Adam—every one who has repented and believed in Jesus shall be there: all these shall come in glory with Christ, when Christ shall appear in glory: he that was poorest amongst them shall be as blessed as he that was most wealthy—the meanest as happy as he that was most honoured upon Earth—yes, the poor Lazarus, wretched in agony, though he was, and in starving poverty and in sore disease in this life, shall be as exulting then and as triumphant as the mightiest Emperor, and wear a Crown of Glory as rich and as full of jewels, and as bright as the brightest worn—the Magdalene, who knelt at the feet of Jesus washing them with her penitential tears, shall be as blissful as that Apostle, who leant upon

the breast of Jesus, and whom Jesus loved—the Christian, who perished without a friend to soothe his pains, in anguish, in solitude, and in starvation, as full of joy as he who fell asleep in Jesus, surrounded by many kind and affectionate friends, and comforted by all the consolations and relief which riches procure.

Every one in the joyful assembly shall be happy: all there shall be joy: God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death—neither sorrow nor crying to them—neither shall there be any more pain, but the Lord God shall give them light,—in His presence, they shall have fulness of joy—and at His right hand pleasures for evermore.

But here let us pause for a brief moment: and while we are questioning our own hearts about our own condition and asking ourselves, if we have any good reason to rest upon the bright hope of being one in the happy assembly of those who shall attain to eternal life—let us for a brief moment pause to admire the life of our friend, who was summoned into the blessedness of Heaven, with not an hour of warning to enable him to set his house in order: with not a moment of notice to enable him, to prepare to meet his God. Are we, as he to all external appearances was, ready? If we should hear at midnight this cry made—"Behold! the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him?" Are we ready? Have we our lamps burning? Have we oil in our vessels close at hand—and should we be able to trim them at so short a notice, if we should hear this voice of the bridegroom's coming to us before another morning's dawn? That he was ready—he our friend, our patron—our faithful benefactor—who can doubt? No—we need not be sorry for him, as men without hope are sorry for their dead.

It is not in mortal man—it is not possible for any of the sinful race of Adam—it is not possible for any of those, who are born in sin and conceived in iniquity and prone to evil from their youth, to be perfect before God and faultless before man—if it were, we should have had no need of a Redeemer's blood to wash away the pollutions of our

holiest services as well as the guilt of our sins—but I confidently say, that if the name of “Good” could without impiety be applied to any man: He whose departure has filled our hearts with such bitter sorrow—**LORD BUTE**, who was so generous a friend to all of you as well as so kind a patron to me—was indeed a Good man: and there is no doubt, that when Christ shall appear in Glory—Christ, who was his life upon earth, that then he also shall appear in Glory with Him. Such at least is my hope, and it is not a presumptuous hope—such is indeed my wish, and it *is* a hearty wish—such was often my prayer for him, while he was living, and such shall be my consolation now he is—dead!! He is not dead—he is not here—in that vault—he is not here—but he is risen—his spirit has burst forth from the chains, with which he was confined in the tabernacle of flesh. He has risen—he is not dead—he is not there, with that cold clay in that damp vault—but he is living—his good deeds are living in our memories—his holy life is living for our example. His immortal soul is living—he is living—his spirit has returned to God, who gave it, and through the merits of his Redeemer, he is living in Heaven. “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like unto his”—

“Sure the last end

“Of the good man is peace. How calm his exit!

“Night-dews fall not more gently to the ground,

“Nor weary worn-out winds expire so soft.”

THE GRAVE, BY ROBERT BLAIR.

How often, when visiting with him here, have we seen him labour “from early morn to dewy eve”—listening, with tender Christian compassion, to the voice of suffering poverty—relieving the wants, redressing the wrongs, and with a pitying heart alleviating the sufferings of the poor! What was his motive? God searcheth the heart, and God trieth the reins. What could his motive have been, if not a holy one? “By their fruits shall ye know them.” Yes, could we have looked into his inmost soul, we should, I verily believe, have found that, though modestly entertained, the real motive, which was the richest secret of his heart, was “the love of Christ constraining him.”

All of us here have lost—you, my poorer brethren, and I have lost such a friend as we can hardly ever hope to know again upon Earth. God gave him to us, and we valued his worth too little—his excellencies too slightly. God has taken him away from us, and now he is gone, we are just beginning rightly to estimate his value—justly to feel our loss. “But blessed be the name of the Lord.” We deserved not the blessings, the comforts, the security we enjoyed under his friendship, through his kindness—from his Christian love under his protection.

Well may you weep; the time will soon come, when your tears will be flowing in earnest lamentations for the want of such a friend as you have now to mourn. It may please God, though to human foresight it seem to be scarcely possible, to raise up for you such another benefactor. “All things are possible with God;” but you must not expect such a blessing—because, even with the same good-will, another Proprietor will scarcely have the means to be so profusely liberal, as was LORD BUTE all the year round to you. Was he not always bountiful in his gifts to you? He was—then ask yourselves this question and put it closely home to yourselves. Do you deserve such another benefactor? one so good—so kind—so compassionate—so glad to hear—so ready to relieve your wants—so patient in listening to your tales of sorrow—so sympathising with your distresses? Was he not an instrument of good, all but boundless to you in the hands of God? Your hearts must know, whether my voice is this day true? He was—but where was your gratitude? and how did you show it? Did you come hither rejoicing to the House of Prayer to return your thanks to God for such a gift? Then can we be surprised, that God has been pleased to take him, who was faithful, to a home of happiness away from us, who were and are unworthy? Our friend is gone—“we shall see his face no more.” He who so generously relieved your wants is gone,—you will hear his kind and Christian voice no more,—but he has left behind him a name to be loved for his charities—to be venerated for

his goodness—to be respected for his virtues, and to be honoured for all his excellencies.

His loss is incalculable—who can sum up its amount, whose tongue is sufficiently eloquent to describe it, in the deep pangs with which it is and still, after months have passed away, still will be felt? No tongue *can* describe the loss, which the Lady, whom he has left behind him in sorrow, must now be feeling in her widowed heart: his nearest relatives have lost a most affectionate kinsman—his friends have lost a judicious and generous confederate—his acquaintances have lost an amiable associate and a useful guide: his domestics have lost a kind and considerate master: the poor have lost one of their best friends upon earth: the State has lost a wise Counsellor, a steady Defender of the laws and usages of the land, a discreet Legislator and a most faithful Servant of the Crown; and the Christian Church has lost one of its polished Corner-stones, one of its very brightest examples and a strong pillar, upon whose fidelity it could rest and upon whose support it could securely depend. His light did shine before men—we did see his good works—we still see them there in those Almshouses*—in this Church: we still see them recorded in your persons, for is there a single one of you now hearing me—Tenant or Cottager—who did not find him a faithful friend?—who was not at one time or another either a recipient of his kindness or an object of his bounty? Are ye not then epistles of his good works, which might be known and read of all men? On which side shall I look in *vain* to find the individual, that has not been benefited by him? *Are not my words to-day true?*

We have seen his good works—we still do see them on every side around us—therefore for his good works “let us glorify our Father

* LORD BUTE built and endowed Six Almshouses at Kirtlinge. In the centre of these Almshouses is a Sunday School-room. He repaired the Chancel of Kirtlinge Church, and put a new Gothic Window into the East end of it: he contributed mainly to the building of the Vicarage House, at Kirtlinge, and also to the building of a new Pariah Church at Ashley cum Silverley, a village adjacent to Kirtlinge: his hand was found helping in every good work.

who is in Heaven." For such a loss it is only natural, that sorrow should fill our hearts—but he himself is happy—he himself must be happy in Heaven; therefore again let us—although we cannot but weep for our own loss—let us rejoice with him, who now does rejoice in Heaven—in sure and certain hope of his resurrection to eternal life, in sure and certain hope, "that when Christ who is our life shall appear, that then he shall also appear with him in Glory."

At the hour of death, when earthly things and worldly objects can no longer minister to our sinful appetites and wicked passions, we shall, doubtless, wish to belong to the blessed people amongst whom we hope our departed friend is now rejoicing around the throne of God; let us then be wise at once—let us awake to righteousness, and sin not—let us set our affections on things above and not upon things on the Earth—let us seek to obtain treasure in Heaven, and so where our treasure is, there let our hearts be also.

CONCLUDING PRAYER.

O Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, be thou graciously pleased to grant unto us to have our life in Christ, that when He shall appear in Glory at the great last day, to Judge the world, we may also appear in Glory with Him, and in exulting songs praise Thee for all Thy goodness shown to us through Him; even as now also we desire to thank Thee for all Thy mercies, and especially for permitting us to accomplish this work, which we beseech Thee to prosper, and for the Glory of Thy own Holy Name, to make a blessing to immortal souls, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with Thee, O Father, and with Thee, O Holy Ghost, Three Persons, but only One living and true God, be all the praise and glory of every good thought, word, and work now and for evermore. "Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord."—Psalm CL. 6. Amen.

FINIS.

[ENTERED AT STATIONER'S HALL.]

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